

AN EARLY COLLECTION OF *SALIX BALSAMIFERA*.

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ON referring to the discussion of *Salix balsamifera* Barratt in Sargent's *Silva*, the writer recently noticed a statement which, by frequent repetition, has come to be strongly associated with the history of our knowledge of this unique species. The statement referred to:—*Salix balsamifera* was first collected by Mr. Henry Little in August, 1823, on the bank of the Ammonoosuc River among the White Mountains of New Hampshire"<sup>1</sup>—originated with the late M. S. Bebb in 1879. At that time Bebb called attention<sup>2</sup> to Mr. Little's specimen preserved in the herbarium of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia; but, although the type material of the species which is botanically of the greatest importance was collected by Sir John Richardson from "Lake Winnipeg and the Saskatchewan,"<sup>3</sup> Mr. Little's earlier and long-overlooked collection of *S. balsamifera* has received such unusual prominence in the past third of a century as "the oldest herbarium specimen extant"<sup>4</sup> of the species that it is appropriate, for the sake of historical accuracy, to record a still earlier collection of this willow. And, just as the Little specimen of *S. balsamifera* lay in a public herbarium unrecognized and unrecorded for more than half a century, it is perhaps noteworthy that the earlier-discovered but heretofore unrecorded specimen was collected 120 years ago and until 1903 lay apparently unnoticed (at least undetermined) in the herbarium of the Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle at Paris.

In 1903 while examining the plants in the Michaux Herbarium the writer was interested to find this sheet of very characteristic foliage of *Salix balsamifera* bearing in Michaux's hand the label: "dans les marais de Batiscan." The species, presumably because represented

<sup>1</sup> Sargent, *Silva*, xiv. 64 (1902).

<sup>2</sup> Bebb, *Bot. Gaz.* iv. 190 (1879).

<sup>3</sup> Hook. *Fl. Bor.-Am.* ii. 149 (1839).

<sup>4</sup> "Here we have, I doubt not, the oldest herbarium specimen extant of *S. balsamifera*"—Bebb, *Bull. Torr. Bot. Cl.* xv. 122 (1888). "It was first discovered more than half a century ago among the White Mountains of New Hampshire"—*J., Garden and Forest*, i. 246 (1888). "This fragmentary specimen he [Bebb] recognized as *Salix balsamifera* and realized that it was the earliest collection of the species."—Sargent, *Garden and Forest*, vi. 28 (1893).

only by foliage, was not described in Michaux's *Flora Boreali-Americana*, and in the herbarium the sheet had been left among the unnamed specimens following those which formed the basis for the *Flora*. The label, "in the bogs of Batiscan," gives the desired clue to the date of collection, for on the 14th of July, 1792, Michaux botanized in the bogs at Batiscan (in Champlain Co., Quebec) and there collected some very characteristic bog plants. His journal of that date reads: "Le 14 herborisé a 8 li. de distance des Trois Riv. dit Batiscan; plus bas Andromeda polifolia, Kalmia glauca, angustifolia; Azalea glauca [?], Ledum palustre [groenlandicum], Comarum. . . ." <sup>1</sup> Whether or not Michaux's material of *Salix balsamifera* gathered in 1792 is the earliest collection of the species, which is not improbable (although this willow is common in eastern Newfoundland and various regions of eastern Canada whence early collections of plants were carried to Europe), it is obvious that his material was collected thirty-one years earlier than Little's specimen from the White Mountains, the specimen which has so often been cited as the earliest collection of the species.

#### GRAY HERBARIUM.

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BOWMAN'S FOREST PHYSIOGRAPHY.<sup>2</sup> — Although written primarily for foresters and students of forestry, Professor Bowman's book will find an interested circle of readers among students of plant-geography, for in it are stated in clear and readable style the general physiographic features of the United States, with discussions of soils and climatic conditions, and much other matter which bears directly upon the distribution, not only of forests, but of other plants as well. The field-botanists whose interests lead them to the boundaries of physiography and geology are constantly in need of authoritative information upon these allied subjects and by them Bowman's *Forest Physiography* will be heartily welcomed.— M. L. F.

<sup>1</sup> Journal of André Michaux, 1787-1796, ed. C. S. Sargent (Proc. Am. Phil. Soc. xxvi. no. 129) p. 72 (1888).

<sup>2</sup> Forest Physiography. Physiography of the United States and Principles of Soils in Relation to Forestry, by Isaiah Bowman, Ph.D. 8vo. xxii-759 pp. 292 figs. and 6 plates. Cloth, \$5.00 net. New York. John Wiley & Sons.